

# China's Soft Power in Bangladesh: A Comparative Studies

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## ABSTRACT

China is now carrying the reputation of the world's fastest economy's title and creating an international good image in her soft way. China's way of creating an international image is different from the United States of America. China has its own inclusive way of flourishing. Chinese Yan-Yang philosophy makes China's cultural inclusiveness and makes it how to balance the paradoxical situation in the international arena. The international system is changing with the passage of time. China is becoming a more influential international actor in world politics and regional power also. China's reemergence and rejuvenation are not connected with military strategy but with China's Soft power. China's South Asia policy is well designed for long term strategy to follow win-win relations and that also visualized a prominent leadership role in the South Asian region. Bangladesh is Geopolitically and strategically a very prominent country. The paper is focusing on the pragmatic theory. The paper talks about Bangladesh's perspective on China's soft power, Bangladesh-India and China relation's paradox which is the most important challenge for Bangladesh. Despite skeptics, the parameter of Bangladesh-China relation is gradually rising high. Soft power exchange is following President Xi Jinping's 'Win-Win' projection for both Bangladesh and China. The paper is about China's soft power in Bangladesh and mutual relations.

**Keywords:** *Soft power, Diplomacy, International relation, Bureaucratic control, Geopolitics.*

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## Highlights of this paper

- This study intends to influence of soft power of China on surrounding countries.
- It also focuses on the soft power influence of China on Bangladesh.
- This study employs a pragmatic theory for the interpretation of soft power.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century when the world is facing, sharing and transforming too fast, no country can be separated from the effect of each other. China is the world's fastest economy. China is following her soft power to be the world power in international politics (Lueck *et al.*, 2014). China is now following an assertive role in international politics. In the regime of President Xi Jinping, he dreams about China's rejuvenation and win-win concept for the world's mutual benefit (Sarker *et al.*, 2018). China is focusing on economic and friendly relations with the idea of mutual trust and benefits. China has various cultures, philosophies and economic strength. And China more interestingly is following former Dean of Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government Mr. Josheph Nye first introduced the concept of Soft power in 1990. He argued that soft power is connected to a country's culture, language, ideology, political values, and foreign policies. China's South Asia policy is well designed for long term strategy to follow win-win relations and that also visualized a prominent leadership role in the South Asian region (Yang, 2010). Bangladesh is a member of BCIM, shared semi-industrial corridor of ASEAN, a neighbor of India and the Bay of Bengal. Without a doubt, Bangladesh is strategically located in South Asia and Southeast Asia (Sarker *et al.*, 2018).

Bangladesh and China both are now well weather friends. Before 2000, it was said that China carried the best friendship with Pakistan in the South Asian regime. Bangladesh and China have started diplomatic relations since on 4th October in 1975. In 2000, Bangladesh and China both have celebrated the 25 years of friendship with each other and both countries are now sharing mutual trust and all-weather friendship in all sectors (Sarker *et al.*, 2019). In South Asia's region, India always plays an important role. Bangladesh and India always carry their good bond of trust and relations. In 2002, Bangladesh's foreign policy has started to follow the 'Look East Policy' and the Bangladesh government and Beijing have started to rebuild many Memorandum of Understandings (MoU) (Kahandawaarachchi, 2015). China has also changed her image from isolation to assertive image in the international community. During the period of Deng Xioping as President of China, he said that China should hide capabilities and should take time to be stronger. In the president Xi Jinping's regime, he offers a 'Chinese Dream' which is connected with three mantras. He also endorses the neighborhood policy. Neighborhood policy and win-win policy both are closely connected with the mutual benefits.

President Xi Jinping has introduced the idea of a good neighborhood with no interference and dominance to the foreign country and firmly believe in mutual trust and good friendship on the bases of Sovereignty, territorial importance, security, and stability. In 2016, Bangladesh government gave affirmative conscious on BRI project when president Xi has paid his visit to Bangladesh. Bangladesh government shows positive view and trust in China's dream project. Bangladesh is now taking the help of China in infrastructure and hardware sectors (Huang, 2018). Bangladesh and China government both have now exchange program in education and professional sectors. In Bangladesh, Chinese language center or Confucius Centre, Chinese food hub and Chinese medicine are becoming more popular (Zhou and Luk, 2016).

Bangladesh and China's well trust relations sometimes mistrusted by the Indian government, though Bangladesh always try to balance good relations with both countries (Islam, 2015). The paper will basically discuss about China's soft power in Bangladesh and positive experience with China, though there are a lot of skeptics. But through the lens of pragmatism, the fact is that both countries are now on the peak of economic, diplomatic and military relations to gain the mutual benefits.

China's uprising in international domain is very noticeable by the world. China has the fastest growing economy in the present world. But interestingly, there is soft power behind China's uprisings. Chinese society and government always talk about harmonious society by tradition of China and win-win policy for international society. China is the second highest economy's country with many philosophies, language and culture and own medicine (Gill and Huang, 2006). China is using her soft power to make a good relation with South Asian states. In my paper, I will discuss the Soft power of China and its implication in Bangladesh and why Bangladesh government is accepting the win-win project of China. In South Asia, Bangladesh is an important state actor. Bangladesh is a geopolitically and strategically important and Indian neighbor. China has already endorsed BRI mega project which connects most of the South Asian countries except India. Bangladesh is also a part of BRI project and Bangladesh government supports the Chinese BRI mega project for regional development and connectivity. On the other side, India is the neighbor of China and both states are economically rising power. This paper will also seek the perception difference between India and Bangladesh on China's soft power, and how China's soft power in Bangladesh is making a 'win-win' relation. China's soft power is getting popular in Bangladesh. Though Bangladesh's neighboring country India's policy is suspicious to china, Bangladesh government is not following the same strategy of India.

Power means which has the caliber to influence others. China's soft power is changing the image of China. Bangladesh is not out of touch with it. If we think only in the traditional way then China is not part of South Asia. But if you think about the Himalayan regime then China is closely connected with South Asia. The paper basically talks about Bangladesh's social economic and structural good relations on the bases of China's soft power. There is a lot of paper on China's soft power and South Asia. But, this paper intends to find why Bangladesh is accepting the soft power where the neighbor state India is not showing interest in it. And China-Bangladesh mutual relationship's best part is both countries always maintain their stable relations and now they have become all-weather friends in this region.

The paper seeks the China-Bangladesh's relations through the lens of soft power and also reveals Bangladesh's relation with China is counted as suspicious to India. So balancing relations with China and India is a strong challenge for Bangladesh foreign policy.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

The study will follow qualitative methods with the assistance of secondary literature containing facts and analysis of the issue. Secondary data like government reports, international NGOs report, various available documents, journal articles, books, and newspaper articles have been assessed all related data for ensuring data reliability as well as validity. A careful selection of information has been done through cross-checking of information. Sometimes, this study depends on online sources but careful cross-checking and verification have been done. Besides, expert opinion has be collected from Bangladesh. A careful selection of the latest information also been done for meaningful presentation of this study. I will also take help from scholarly articles, newspapers of both Bangladesh, China and India. Here, the research is conducted by the pragmatism theory.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### *3.1. Background of China- Bangladesh Relation*

Bangladesh-China shared their old histories. In history, the Bay of Bengal was a good way of route for the sea transportation. Historical findings also show that then Bengal Sultan Ghiyas Uddin Azam Shah and Chinese emperor Yung lo had a good relation. They sent gift to each other also. Bangladesh has her own political history. Before 1971's independent war Bangladesh was one part of Pakistan named East Pakistan. At that time, East Pakistan's Bengali leaders were connected with The Chinese Communist Party. Then Bengali leaders Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani and Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy were closely connected with CCP's great leader Mao Zedong. During the 1950's - 1960's Chinese then-premier Zhou Enlai visited East Pakistan many times. The international relations got changed between East Pakistan and China during the time of Bangladesh's independence war. East Pakistan was always deprived from development and benefits. The West extracted all resources from the East. Not only that, West attacked on culture and language of the East. The geopolitical rivalry came out as war in 1971. East Pakistan (present Bangladesh) was desperate to get independence from West Pakistan. The People's Republic of China (PRC) stood against of Bangladesh liberation war which contradicted the promise of PRC's constitution (Joseph, 2009). The constitution of PRC says about the 'revolutionary act of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratically capitalism.

During the war time Bangladesh took help from India. In 1962, China and India already fought with each other. On that time China and Pakistan shared a good bondage of relations. Pakistan was also connected with United States. USA leaders were planning to visit China for the first time through the via of Pakistan. In 1971, the People's Republic of China replaced Taiwan as a permanent member of UN Security Council and the first veto was used to support Pakistan during the war of 1971. After independence, Bangladesh again chose Soviet Union for the post war and reconstruction help. On that time China and Soviet Union has some ideological clashes. Bangladesh need the UN membership to get more aid for reconstruction of the post war. Chinese delegate Huang Hua voted against the membership of Bangladesh in United Nation. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman started to think about Chia's importance on getting Bangladesh's UN membership. Bangladesh's then foreign minister Abdus Samad Azad also sent letter to Chinese premier Zou En Lai. In 1974, Bangladesh faced severe flood and then Chinese government has started to show their soft power over Bangladesh. China sent the first humanitarian aid to Bangladesh. Bangladesh foreign policy started a new journey through the friendship. Gradually, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman became equally close to India, Russia and China.

After the assassination of Sheikh Mujib Mejoor Zia came in Power. In 1975, China and Bangladesh have started to build stronger diplomatic relations. Ziaur Rahman, who first restored free market in Bangladesh also tried hard to make a positive relation with China. Beijing and Dhaka started to make cooperation and sustainable relations in October 1975. After Ziaur rahman, General Hussain Mohammad Ershad came in power without any bloodshed. In his regime, no new policy was there. He balanced the relations with India and China also. He institutionalized liberalization process and private company ownership in Bangladesh. In his nine years regime he visited China five times. During his visit, he showed his support to 'one China policy' and never try to make any relations with Taiwan (Sarker *et al.*, 2018). And in 1982 and 1986, Chinese president Li Ximannian visited Bangladesh and they talked about both countries' mutual benefits, trade and future relations.

In 2002, there was Mrs. Khaleda Zia as Bangladesh's prime minister. And she started to follow a new policy of 'Look East'. The main aim of that policy was to maximize the economic benefits of both countries. In 2002, Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji came Dhaka for bilateral economic cooperation. Sheikh Hasina came in power in 2009 in Bangladesh. China and Bangladesh relations gradually has reached 'all weather' friend. In this regime, China stands as the trading partner for Bangladesh (Sarker *et al.*, 2018). Bangladesh's exports to China has increased from 319.66 million USD of 2010-2011 fiscal year to 808.14 million USD in 2015-2016 fiscal year. Bangladesh economists

predict that if the growth remains continue then bilateral trade volume will reach 18 billion within 2021. China is now Bangladesh's trusted friend in connectivity, communication, technology, maritime security, agriculture and transportation and information sectors.

### *3.2. Soft Power Concepts*

In International Relations, there are lots of power (Hard power, Soft power and Smart power). Power in International Relations is traditionally connected with 'Hard' power. Sometimes connected with economic and military context. Soft power study of international relations has started based on war, border, security, arms, military but in the west the concept soft power has come after the second world war. The world was divided in two part and busy on playing ideological expansion game. Historically, United States used soft power in the cold war time to appeal the world and showed the leadership capability of USA. Marshal plan is a good example of soft power promoting of USA. Joseph Nye Jr. first academically described the soft power topic in international relations theory in 1980's. Now it is very popular in policy making agenda and policy debate also (Lee, 2009). In the book of 'Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power' Mr. Joseph Nye wrote that soft power is image building. He argued that soft power is connected with country's culture, language, ideology, political values, and foreign policies. He again discussed the soft power in 2001. He argues, "soft Power rests on the ability to shape the preference of others. In the first defining soft power he did not include economics in soft power. He included it in hard power because of economic sanctions in international politics. But gradually the definition of soft power gets changed. Though in China soft power policy was deployed by President Hu Jintao in 2003. But China's scholars say that China first imagined and introduced by Lao Tsu. Joseph Nye developed the concept with three pillars- culture, values and foreign policy. Some scholars argue that soft power is better than hard power if any country spend more money on it Sarker *et al.* (2018). I also think that, in international relations, investing soft power policy finds benefits in long term. But, hard power is more coercive and soft power is getting world's eyes because its uniqueness. Now China is becoming a good actor for playing in international politics (Gallarotti, 2011). In China, BRI project is a good example of showing why China's soft power is becoming popular than USA or India. USA president Donald Trump's foreign policy is more likely hard power relevant. His government is cutting aid of international organizations and giving more priority on hard coercive power (Sarker, 2019b). USA's soft power is not enough to win the heart of the World. China's adoption of soft power in foreign policy is making China more accepted to Asia and African countries and gradually USA is losing to keep the temptation of being super power (Rothman, 2011).

### *3.3. Influence of Chinese Soft Power*

Soft power is something that makes an attraction to political leaders and international policies. Why China is interested in soft power promoting in this question's answer Mr. Nye replied that China believes that the best way to be global power is to attract others. Mr. Nye said in his speech that China is following a strategy in three ways, one is using economy, another is culture, arts and language and last one is developing technical and mechanical staffs. China is very enriched with own culture and languages (Sarker, 2019c). China's old history is very much connected with South Asian countries (Zanardi, 2016). And gradually South Asian countries are getting attracted by China's soft power. What is the reason behind it? The simple answer is South Asian countries were connected with colonialism and exploitations (Sarker, 2019a). Still now the country's economy is suffering and states are fighting to minimize their poverty rate (Wang and Lu, 2008). On that part, China is showing her help to these states with economic support and also creating job opportunities. In Bangladesh, Export processing Zones are

taking the employee who knows Chinese well. Because, Chinese people are funding in the projects and delegates come in the zone. And Bangladeshi people are working as a translators and others. China's philosophy is powerful. It talks about harmonies society. This harmonies and inclusiveness also important in international arena (Sarker *et al.*, 2019). After 1965, China never engaged her in the war in South Asia. China is showing her soft strategy with India also though India has rejected China's BRI project (Zhou and Luk, 2016).

China thinks that India's good relations with the USA will play a dominating role in Asia region and specially South China Sea and the Indian Ocean. But truth is that China and USA both carry different strategies to create image. Where Donald Trump is getting out of humanitarian and environmental organizations, then President Xi is working on poverty eradication of Africa, Asia and making joint collaborations to protect ecological damage (Chaturvedy, 2019). It is obvious that from the time of 2003 until now the USA and other major powers have been waging war and projecting hard power as a way to consolidate power and lead their sphere of influence (Clarke, 2016). China, on the other hand, holds a quasi-role not to appoint all the conflict concentrates purely on image build up advocating peace and development which reflects Beijing's superior stand than the USA (Yang, 2010). In this policy recommendation, China has also set the goal to make Xinhua and CCTV as global news network with true international standards. Its aim is to confront the monopoly of western media. Therefore, it has already launched a multi-floor TV studio complex in Washington DC. China has been actively establishing a broad network of Confucius institute on the model of British council and French Alliance and set up numbers of classroom worldwide to spread language and culture (Lueck *et al.*, 2014).

### *3.4. Chinese Soft Power in Bangladesh*

Bangladesh China's mutual relations do not come from a vacuum. It happens also for international politics. Bangladesh and China have been maintaining their good friendly relations for many years. Historically, Chinese many monks, scholars, and businessmen frequently traveled Bengal from the Qin dynasty (First dynasty of Imperial China from 221-206 BC). Atisa Dipankar Srijanan traveled from Bengal to Tibet and played an important role in developing Tibetan Buddhism. From Deng Xiaoping to Xi Jinping, there is a lot of policy changing but Bangladesh and China has maintained their balanced cordial relations. In 1991, then president Deng Xiaoping made the economic reform with an open up policy. On that time Bangladesh has just entered in the era of globalization and garments industry (Sarker *et al.*, 2019). The inception of readymade garments has started in 1980's. Bangladesh has started export of garments product in mid 990's. President Xi Jinping has introduced a new term. He coined the 'Chinese Dream' or 'Rejuvenation of China' which reveals China's rise in a peaceful way. Under Xi Jinping the government of China is focusing new institutionalizing of China with 'Socialism with Chinese Characteristics in a new era' and giving priority to blue economy, information security, cultural linkage making, investment policy and so on non-traditional issues (Pecheritsa and Boyarkina, 2017). China's best soft power initiative which catches eye sight of the world is Belt and Road Initiative. The mega project is counted as a mixture of both hard and soft power. China's foreign policy includes inclusiveness, non-interference, neighborhood, multi polar world system (Sarker *et al.*, 2019). President's new policy is using these factors for 'striving for achievement' (Lum *et al.*, 2008). Bangladesh is geographically very important (Nasrin *et al.*, 2019). Bangladesh is physically enclosed by India.

Before discussing China's soft power influence in Bangladesh, let me say the geopolitical prominent of Bangladesh (Sarker *et al.*, 2018). Bangladesh has a portion of the Bay of Bengal. China focuses her attention on energy. For energy import export all countries need sea route. Bangladesh is a better regional hub in South Asia. The port of Chittagong can be easily used as a regional hub for sea travel route. On the other side, India and China both are Asian giant and the both countries act as competitive actor in the region. But all the scholars think that



when India and China both countries will helpful and economically priority on Indian Ocean and China is now investing money in littoral states around the Indian Ocean (Sarker *et al.*, 2018). China has already built pipe line with Myanmar. And also planning to build a parallel pipeline connecting Kunming-Chittagong. This is a strategic backup point. If USA and India will start to act as adversaries of China and block the chock-points of Malacca and Indian Ocean, China will use the regional hub for balancing resource management (Hunter, 2009). Prime minister Sheikh Hasina visited China in 2014 and in 2016 President of China visited Bangladesh. In 2016, Bangladesh gave her confirmation on BRI. Bangladesh thinks that Bangladesh should use her geographical proximity and location. Bangladesh government thinks that the project will make Bangladesh stronger in domestic economic progress and international export-import and Bangladesh's economy will be more stable (Sarker *et al.*, 2018), more developed than other South Asian countries will also get the benefits (Matthew *et al.*, 2010). Bangladesh is under the 'string of pearl' theory for the geographical location and also for the access of the Bay of Bengal. Now Asian countries are thinking to give

### *3.4.1. Economic Perspective*

Bangladesh - China economic relation was started in 1974. The relation was started for the international arena. In the Zia's regime, Bangladesh first get infrastructure fund for Farakka barrage. That was the starting. After that The Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka was built by the Chinese assistance and articulated by Beijing Institute of Architectural Designs and Research, the Shah Amanat Bridge in Chittagong is also built by the help of Chinese government and Recently the Padma bridge. Under major diplomatic initiatives and foreign policy reforms China has been putting enormous effort to lead the republic in the direction of peaceful rise enunciating the idea of peaceful development, demonstrates its soft power exposure. To that end from Deng Xiaoping to Xi Jinping several policy changes were recommended and gradually introduced to expose it as a responsible stakeholder in the global community. In 2016, President Xi Jinping visited Bangladesh and both countries have signed MoU and good bonding of relations (Sharma and Khatri, 2019). China has provided 24 billion USD for 20 projects during the president Xi's visiting. According to the Finance Time, in 2019 Bangladesh will receive more 31 billion USD for rail, metro and other infrastructure. Beijing policy argues that constructions and infrastructure developments are important for communication building and economic developments of both countries. Under the BRI project and Maritime Silk Road project, Dhaka and Beijing are providing their more effort on economic mutual benefits. China is the no one trading partner of Bangladesh. According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics says that Bangladesh exporters are upbeat about China's market. Bangladesh-China's bilateral trade has reached 18.74 billion USD in 2018. In 2018, Bangladesh exported 1 billion USD in China. Bangladesh's Ready-made garments is enjoying the comparative advantage and producing a good number. According to former president of Bangladesh Export Promotion Bureau says, 'The Chinese market would grow automatically as they have already shifted from producing basic items. We should maintain a warm relationship with China for higher export'. According to the bureau Bangladesh export of leather and garments are very prominent. According to the Economists of both countries are predicting that after finishing the BRI construction Bangladesh's economy rate will raise 7.8. About trade, in 1971, India was Bangladesh's major trading partner. But China-Bangladesh trade has surpassed the India-Bangladesh trade number. In 2001, total trade of Bangladesh-China was 1.1 billion USA dollar and in 2009 the trade between the two countries has increased 770 billion USD. In many industries of Bangladesh India is losing it influence in the respect of economy. Since 2004 China-Bangladesh trade has started to bloom and now Bangladesh is the highest trading partner in South Asia. Now India is losing her economic strategy over Bangladesh (Kurlantzick, 2006). Bangladesh basically imports cotton, frozen food, tea, ready-made garments, lather, raw jute,

fish, raw fabrics and fertilizers. Bangladesh exports technological and mechanical products. Under Asia Pacific Free Trade Agreement China has removed 84 items of Bangladeshi products which is counted as a big factor for continuing healthy relations (Sarker *et al.*, 2019). On the other side, India and Bangladesh's economic relation is mostly hampered by tariff barriers. Bangladesh has a comparative advantage on RMG sector. But India has imposed 16% countervailing tax on Bangladeshi RMG products which is creating a negative perception about India's market. The parameter of both countries' relation status is reaching higher with mutual trust. Big infrastructures are constructing by the help of China. Cultural exchange of China-Bangladesh both are very popular now. Recent time Chinese infrastructure companies are getting more popular in Bangladesh. Chittagong and Kunming are going to be connected through the road connection. On the other side Bangladesh and Myanmar is also going to get connected with road. This connection will make the region more economically interdependent and prosperous.

### *3.4.2. Cultural Perspective*

Many scholars pay their priority on educational exchange of China Bangladesh. Cooperation in exchanging students is also part of soft power policy of Xi Jinping. Chinese language is now becoming popular to the young generations. It also creating lots of opportunity to get good job. In Bangladesh now there are a lot of Chinese companies and because of China Bangladesh investment is very high. So, Bangladesh EPZs are offering lot of jobs for Chinese educated youths. There are Confucius center for learning Chinese. Bangladesh University of Professionals which is run by military and University of Dhaka, North South University and Shanto Mariam University also encourage students to learn Chinese. Many students of universities also get blessed by Chinese Confucius Scholarship provided by China. Bangladesh and China collaborate with each other for skill developing program to get high productive economy (Sarker *et al.*, 2018). In Bangladesh, there are more than 700 Chinese citizen are living mostly in Dhaka and Chittagong area and in China there are more than 2000 colleges. So, Bangladeshi students feel very positive to choose china for their Bachelor and higher studies. Both countries are mutually connected with 'Education Plan' under Belt and Road Initiatives which is issued by Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China in July 2016. Bangladesh and China now bilateral relations are not only confined in defense and economic issues. They also share their relations on cultural, educational, sports, exhibition, exchange of scholars and students, delegation exchange of trade.

In Bangladesh, Chinese food, language institutes, Chinese medicine are getting popular. Chinese media CCTV is more attractive to all over the world as well as Bangladesh. Bangladesh and China both countries are now enjoying highest pick of bilateral relations. Recently we found many facts and news. Let's see some mainstream newspaper's news. Bangladesh China Jointly organized art exhibition bilaterally in Dhaka. In the exhibition China and Bangladeshi artists more than 250 were participated. Bangladesh and China have organized 'Silk Road Exhibition' and which has received worldwide praise. Bangladesh government's former cultural minister Asaduzzaman Noor and Chinese ambassador to Bangladesh Zhang Zuo visited the exhibition and the exhibition was titled 'Colorful Cloud over Silk Road' in July 2018.

### *3.4.3. Diplomatic Perspective*

Bangladesh and China many times share their hard time together. China always shows a responsible attitude toward Bangladesh. In 1991, Bangladesh was attacked by Hurricane and Bangladesh's economic system was severely suffered by the hurricane. At that time, then Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia visited China and China provided emergency support to Bangladesh. In 1996, Sheikh Hasina visited China and both states signed the 'Agreement on encouraging and protecting investment', the 'Agreement for the avoidance of double taxation' and



the 'Agreement for the prevention of Tax evasion'. China is trying to sort out Bangladesh's Rohingya crisis. 'China will maintain its non-interference policy but will also be proactive (in trying) to mediate in the Rohingya issue'. Hu Zhiyong (Associate researcher at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences). Chinese has proposed to mediate between Bangladesh and Myanmar to resolve the crisis in August and September 2017. China has also become a comfortable friend about terrorism issue. There are lot of state level meetings to counter terrorism. In 2018, Bangladesh home minister Asaduzzaman Khan and Chinese Public Security minister hold meeting on terrorism and counter terrorism (Wu, 2018).

Bangladesh is also a part of BCIM and SAARC. China is an originating partner of BCIM and observing member of SAARC. According to 2014 news, China showed her interest on SAARC. In NEWS18.com, a news came which title was 'China says it wants to elevate partnership with SAARC.' in the program Hua said, 'We keep deepening our cooperation in various fields. We will continue to cooperate with SAARC countries on the basis of peace, stability, stability and prosperity. Water competition is now more important topic in international politics as well as relations. Water is called 'blessings and curse' for Bangladesh. Bangladesh gets flooded in rainy season and gets drought in summer season. Bangladesh -China-India is equally showing their interest on Brahmaputra river basin. The river is the longest basin of Bangladesh water system. Approximately 65% of Bangladesh's total water is provided by Brahmaputra. The river is originated in China and run in India and Bangladesh. The river enters through Assam and then Bangladesh. China is planning to make dam in the river which will effect Bangladesh's human security. The river flowing region of Bangladesh is now facing human security pressure (Sarker *et al.*, 2019). Because still now Bangladesh' most of the river basin side people are living their lives based on agriculture. The shortage of water is making a large number of people's sufferings. Bangladesh is also under threat because of China and India's self-interested water management plans. During the Doklam stand-off China and India both holds talk about trans-border water sharing. India China political stability is also important for Bangladesh's Brahmaputra water management. The Brahmaputra river basin peaceful management is important to restore the water competition in this region. Bangladesh-china and India all should to negotiate with each other to solve the program. I hope that through track one or track two diplomacy China-India and Bangladesh will solve their Brahmaputra water management properly.

### *3.5. Bangladesh-China-India Relations as Paradox*

Bangladesh's China India relationship balancing is now has become a great challenge for Bangladesh foreign policy. In 1974, Bangladesh and China's good relations made little shaking for India. Recently, China is Bangladesh's trading partner on the other side India is losing the attraction of Bangladeshi market. Bangladesh foreign minister has suggested free trade but still now it has no implementation. For exporting Bangladesh's ready-made garments need to pay 16% countervailing tax to export in India. Bangladesh Foreign Ministry is still working on telecasting Bangladesh's mainstream media in India. Bangladesh-India's illegal and informal trade is one problem. Bangladeshi industries are getting more flexibility and tariff free market in China. In the first term of Mr. Modi's foreign policy was neighborhood improvement but he shows his more interest on 'Look East' policy. So, South Asian countries did not get priority in Indian foreign policy. Water issue is also strong issue in Bangladesh India relations. Teesta dispute between two countries still in negotiation table. But India shows her domestic conflicts on Teesta issue.

Let's talk about some hard power because it is connected to understand why India is misunderstanding Bangladesh. Bangladesh is buying arms and submarine that's creating India suspicious toward Bangladesh. India's Navy admiral and former service chief called it 'as a threat for India and maritime security paradigm'. According to

the Navy man china is trying to encircle India by selling submarines to Bangladesh. Market making idea is very important in China Bangladesh relations. Bangladesh is a small country but with a lot of population. So, Bangladesh is a good market for technology and arms. Bangladesh has welcome China for Chinese submarines and arms. Now, 71% of Chinese arms are sold in Myanmar, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. In 2015, Bangladesh is the second-largest arms importer from China in the world. Arms and submarines are coming from china so Chinese presence is also in Bangladesh for maintaining of the equipment. China is investing money on Bangladesh China India corridor (BCIM) which is very good initiative for market creating. China and Bangladesh are maintaining sustainable relations in defense and development sectors. According to international scholars Bangladesh is playing dichotomous role. But Bangladesh government officials clarifies that Bangladesh is following friendly foreign relations with all countries. Historically Bangladesh India has a good bonding. Still, India is also good friend of Bangladesh. Bangladesh and China have also good bond and sustain relations but this is not conspiracy against any country or neighbor state India. Bangladesh foreign policy is just utilizing geographical location for the achievement of development and sustainable of achievement.

### *3.6. Skeptics and Response*

China is now in global expansion. But many scholars have questioned expanding China's soft power is creating ideological crush with China. China is in the era of rising and the Chinese government are following pragmatism to analyses Chinese foreign policy and soft power. Xinhuanet.com has published one article which argued that China is using the soft power idea to creating to create and improve international image. And also showed criticized view on China media. China has introduced CCTV which is similarly BBC or Aljazeera. China has invested 6.6 billion on this channel. China hopes that this channel will cross the BBC of CNN. But skeptic scholars think that media is established to promote only CPP's agenda or creating propaganda. Soft power is counted as 'external propaganda' factor. Soft power cannot be used well by the Chinese government because with the biased government China cannot promote flexible media and soft power worldwide. Many scholars are showing their positivity and some are showing their questions on China's soft power. But Chinese government officials are trying hard to balance negative and positive issues and trying to make a positive image in the world view. To promote soft power government is not credible because of government structure. Regarding China's soft power in Bangladesh, many scholars argue that China is investing in Bangladesh to counter India or make an aggressive role in South Asia. The mega project BRI is also called a debt trap for Bangladesh. But Bangladesh government has denied the criticism. In a formal program Prime minister's International Affairs adviser Mr. Gowher Rizvi said that Bangladesh government has accepted BRI project and government think BRI as it 'fits into our national priorities'. Many people think that India is opting against BRI because it is linked with Pakistan also. And India is not happy about Bangladesh's joining in BRI. Bangladesh government officials shared their statements many times. According to Mr. Rizvi, "Bangladesh is extremely successful in managing its foreign relations.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

China has become a world power in a different way than the USA. China has not entered in big war and militarization. China has good relations with Pakistan and Bangladesh. But always a stressful relation stays between China and India in the South Asia region. India and Bangladesh have always good relations but with the passage of time, Bangladesh is following peace and the basis of equality and friendship in the international arena. Bangladesh is balancing foreign relations with India and China. In this study, a conclusion has been drawn by showing China's soft power in Bangladesh and its effect in Bangladesh. Though there are many debates about debt

issue, how Bangladesh will overcome the debt of China and the long-term economic stress of Bangladesh, still Bangladesh government is positive about China's soft power projection in Bangladesh. Bangladesh's neighbor country shows no interest in China's soft power but Bangladesh tries to balance the foreign policy relations with neighbor country and China. China is going to be the most prominent power in South Asia as well as World for giving more priority on the non-traditional security and mutual friendship. I agree, Bangladesh and China's relationship went through a lot of decoding but now the states are in a stable relationship. In Bangladesh, many governments have come since 1975. And all the government tried to balance good relations with China. China also showed her proper maturity to balance and encourage the relationship between the two countries. In 2000, for celebrating 25 years of friendship Bangladesh-China inaugurated a Friendship Postal card in 2000.

In 2016, during President Xi Jinping's visit China promised to give Bangladesh 24 billion USD primarily as a line of credit for 24 projects. Bangladesh's government also feel China as a friend and tries to balance cooperative relations. President Xi's rejuvenation of China is going to help Bangladesh also. Bangladesh is a small country but with big hope. Bangladesh wants her stable economic growth and a sustainable economy. To balance it Bangladesh follows 'Friendship policy to all'. Though the intimacy with China is not preferable by India Bangladesh makes it clear that Bangladesh is also a friend of India. So India needs not to be worried about Bangladesh's move. Bangladesh's foreign policy is independent and balancing also. India is also a great power in South Asia. So, I think China should not to count relationships margin on the basis of Bangladesh's relations with China and Pakistan. Bangladesh's foreign policy always plays a friendship role with all his alliance and friend countries.

If we trigger on Bangladesh China's future based on soft power then I can say that China's different approach of expanding soft power is going to create China's hegemonic power in the world. China's non-interference in other state's domestic affairs and economic and cultural exchanges making china's ideology stronger than other countries. China Bangladesh is going to make more connectivity through BRI constructions and seaport. Students teachers, businessmen are visiting China and Chinese artists, engineers are visiting Bangladesh. That is a positive side for maintaining relationships. According to many scholars, the Bangladesh China trade investment is very lucrative to the world. Bangladesh's policymakers are also a consensus about China's investment. Both countries are balancing relations well. President Xi's idea of win-win will also help Bangladesh's progress and economic stability.

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